

# Reduce Gypsy Moth Damage In Your Woods



Keep trees healthy by maintaining proper stocking. A healthy tree can withstand attacks by the gypsy moth and other pests. Periodic thinning encourages vigorous growth and good health. Take time to learn what a well-stocked oak forest looks like. Talk to your local forester.

Increase tree diversity in woodlots dominated by oak. Gypsy moth doesn't like trees such as ash, maple and nut trees. By increasing the proportion of less preferred trees, you help reduce the damage gypsy moth will do in your woods. For more information on silviculture, visit [gypsymoth.wi.gov](http://gypsymoth.wi.gov).



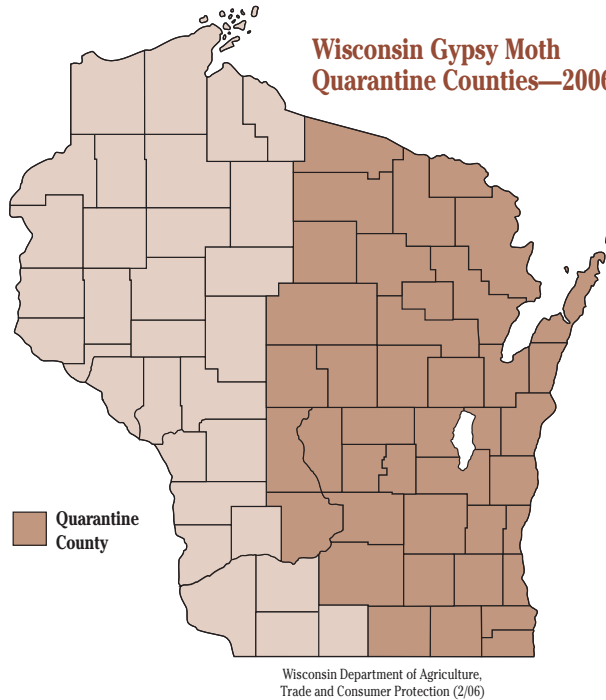
Be alert to increasing gypsy moth populations. If your woodlot is in eastern Wisconsin, visually inspect your trees for gypsy moth egg masses in the fall. If egg masses

are common, you might consider an aerial spraying the following spring. For additional information, go to gypsy moth website above and click on the link for suppression spraying.

Oaks growing in grass are particularly vulnerable to severe defoliation. Why? The lawn discourages mice and shrews from hunting for gypsy moth in these trees, as there is no cover from cats, owls or hawks. These small mammals are the most important predators for gypsy moth and when protected from them, the caterpillars can increase rapidly.

## For more information:

- Visit:** The Wisconsin Cooperative Gypsy Moth Internet site at [gypsymoth.wi.gov](http://gypsymoth.wi.gov)
- Call:** The toll-free gypsy moth information line at 1-800-642-MOTH (6684)

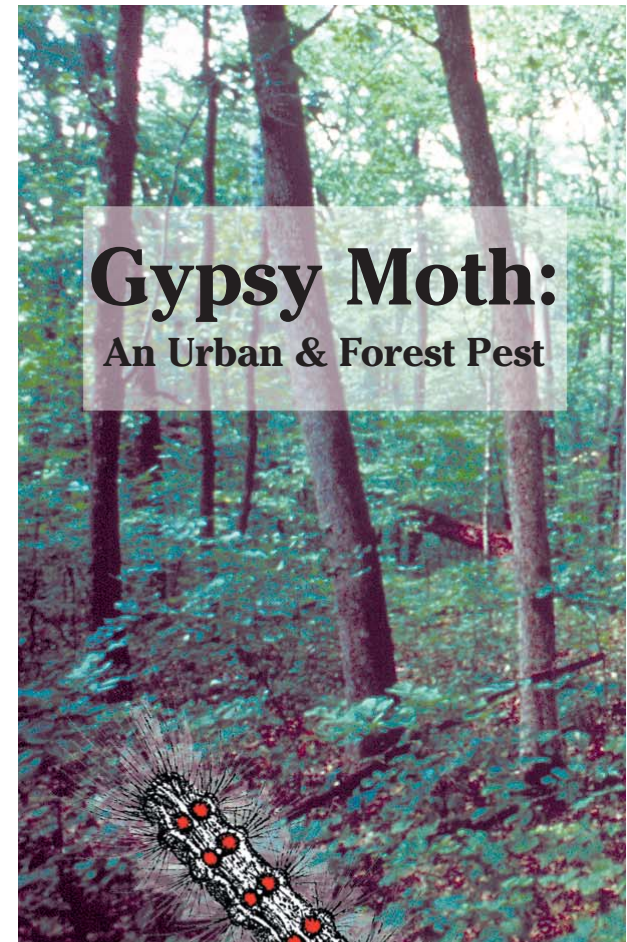


*Text by Andrea Diss, Gypsy Moth Coordinator, WDNR and Genny Fannucchi, Forest Resource Education and Awareness Specialist, WDNR*

*Design by Jeanne Gomoll, Union Street Design, LLC*

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## Gypsy Moth: An Urban & Forest Pest



# Reduce Gypsy Moth Numbers At Home

## Dealing with the Caterpillars



**Barrier Bands**—These sticky bands entangle or deter caterpillars as they move up into trees to feed. Many caterpillars fall out of the tree during dispersal or to escape birds. You can help pre-

vent them from getting back up there to do damage. A narrow band of duct tape applied to the tree, then covered with a sticky pest barrier material—available from lawn or garden centers—will catch the caterpillars. Place these sticky bands on trees in late April and take them down in August or when you put up a burlap collection band. Don't apply the sticky material directly to the tree.



**Collection Bands**—Burlap bands are used to collect older, larger caterpillars. In June and July, gypsy moth caterpillars crawl down the tree trunk during the day to hide from predators. If you put up a burlap band, many will hide under that and you can collect and kill them easily.



## Burlap band how to:



1) Cut a strip of burlap 12–18 inches wide and long enough to go around the tree. Wrap the burlap around the tree at chest height. Tie a string around the burlap 6 inches from the top edge. Let the top 6 inches flop over and form a two-tiered skirt.

2) Check the bands every day from mid-afternoon to about 6 P.M. Use a knife to flick caterpillars into a cup

of soapy water. Don't handle the caterpillars as their hairs can cause a rash! After the caterpillars are dead, throw the insects in the trash.

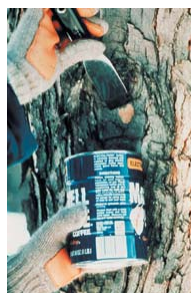
## Killing the Eggs

Killing or removing egg masses is the most effective physical method of reducing the population of gypsy moth in your yard. Each egg mass destroyed is 600–1000 caterpillars you won't have to deal with next spring.

Once leaves have fallen, examine your trees, outdoor furniture, play equipment, structures and even the exterior of your house for egg masses. They are often found in cracks or hidden spots: under signs nailed to trees, shutters or loose bark are favorite sites.



Spray or paint egg masses with a horticultural grade oil labeled for gypsy moth. These products are formulated to penetrate the egg mass, and available at most lawn and garden centers. The oil kills eggs within the mass by coating them and causing the eggs to suffocate.



If you remove egg masses, scrape them off into a jar. Eggs dropped on the ground will hatch next spring. You can kill collected eggs by microwaving them for 2 minutes on high or by covering them in soapy water for 2 days. You can then screw on the top and throw the jar and eggs in the trash.

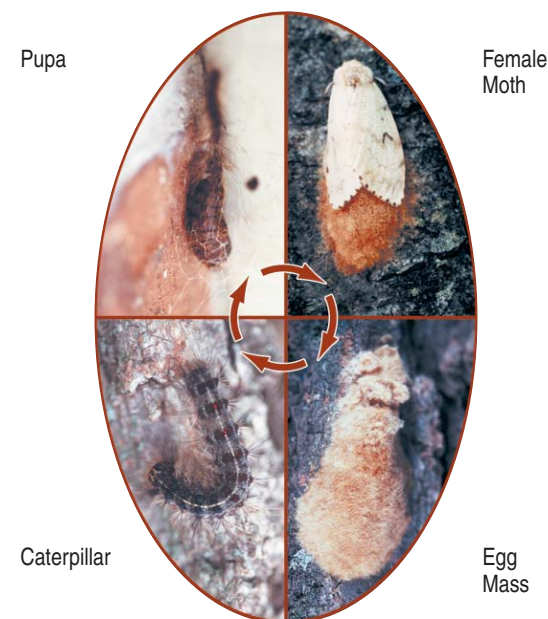
More information about controlling the gypsy moth on your property can be found by visiting [gypsymoth.wi.gov](http://gypsymoth.wi.gov).

## Don't Move Gypsy Moth

The gypsy moth is a major tree pest once it becomes established in a new area. It eats leaves on most trees and may kill them. You can help prevent the gypsy moth from invading new areas by not giving it a free ride.

Gypsy moth often moves into a new location by “hitch-hiking” on outdoor materials like firewood, campers, boats and other things. Although all of the life stages can hitch a ride to some extent, it is usually the egg stage that gets moved around. Be sure to inspect your outdoor equipment for egg masses in the late fall or early spring, before you move them. And if you're moving firewood, consider moving only as much as you'll burn during that trip.

Don't give the gypsy moth a free ride.



## Learn To Recognize Gypsy Moth Life Stages

The **moth** is the adult stage of the insect. The female gypsy moth is white and even though she has wings, she can't fly. The male is one inch long, brown and flies looking for the female in the late afternoon in late July to early Aug. The adult gypsy moths cannot feed and only live long enough to mate and produce eggs.

The female gypsy moth lays all her eggs in one cluster called an **egg mass**. Each egg mass contains 600–1000 eggs. The female covers the eggs with hairs from her body, giving the egg mass a furry appearance. The eggs will hatch next spring.

Small **caterpillars**, having over-wintered in the egg mass, emerge in mid-May. As the caterpillar grows, pairs of colored “dots” appear down the center of its back. The dots are red on the rear half and blue near the head. The caterpillar is covered with bristly hair that can cause a skin rash for people who handle them. Gypsy moth caterpillars feed in May, June and early July. **They do not make silk nests or “tents.”** They come down from the treetop every afternoon starting in June to hide from birds and other predators, then return to the treetop in the evening to feed.

The **pupa** is the gypsy moth's metamorphic stage. Within the pupal shell, the caterpillar's body is rearranging itself into an adult moth. Pupae are present from late July to August.